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# Articles in Today's Clips

**Tuesday, May 27, 2008**

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# MORNING SUN

## Mother striving to get custody

BY PATRICIA ECKER  
Sun Staff Writer

Christina Keschick had been beaten, abused, and tormented, and went to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's Behavioral Health and social services for help.

She ended up losing her entire family.

Last year, Keschick, 35, asked the Tribal Council for protection for herself and her eight children from the children's father, reputed gang member Juan Garcia Romero.

Tribal Council banished Romero from Tribal lands for having a "disruptive" relationship with Keschick, who is a Tribal member.

"I'm a survivor of 12 years of abuse, and I went (to behavioral health and social services) to begin my healing process two years ago," Keschick said. "I kinda got into what their cycle is."

Keschick said her life with Romero was one of terror. She tearfully remembered, having to tell her children to "go in your rooms and hide."

"I was living in a house in Blanchard," Keschick said. "(Romero) started kicking me everywhere, and hitting my back and stomach, and he pulled me by the hair.

"(Romero) stabbed me."

Keschick said that on Christmas Eve 2005, Romero had consumed two fifths of liquor and a case of beer.

"That day, my daughter was playing a joke, and did something to the water spout at the sink," Keschick said. "I got sprayed and I laughed.

"I watched, and (Romero) got sprayed with water, and he was real mad." Keschick said that Romero grabbed their 13-year-old daughter by the throat, and she started to turn purple.

"I punched him when I saw that," Keschick said. "He kicked me in the face four times, and my children were too afraid to call the police.

"My nephew said, 'I'll call them, Auntie.'"

Keschick said she was ashamed to get medical attention because she felt ashamed of how she looked.

She said she never told her parents about her abuse, and she said that the

reason she never left him was because he would ask her, "You still love your parents, right?"

Eventually, Romero was convicted of third-offense domestic violence in January 2006. He has completed his sentence for that charge, but remains on probation until 2012 for a felony conviction of attempted aggravated stalking.

Currently, Keschick carries a global-positioning device that she was told had to be on her at all times for protection from Romero. He has been ordered to stay at least 500 feet away from her, and he also wears a GPS tether.

But Keschick wonders if her device isn't being used to monitor her. After all of that Keshick lived through she hoped that she and her children would be happy once they asked for help.

"Never would I have thought that the help I went for would damage us even more," Keschick said. "I feel worse than when I was with Johnny." Tribal social services workers won't discuss the particulars of the case, citing privacy concerns. But social services experts, speaking in general terms, say children raised in an atmosphere of extreme abuse often need help in learning to adjust to family life based on love, not terror.

Keschick said that since she asked for help, she has not cared for her oldest son, "little Johnny," in three years. He is currently in a licensed state facility for children.

She knows that the abuse has damaged her children, and she wants the opportunity to heal as a family.

Keschick participated in a program called Families First, which was completed in May 2007. She thought she was successful.

"The children are so fortunate to have such a caring and affectionate mother," wrote Natalie Harpe-Moler, a Families First worker. "Please keep celebrating the good in your lives and strive to always stay a strong familial unit."

But things took a turn for the worse in November. She spent the night in jail after being arrested for traffic tickets.

She said that she asked the arresting officer to notify her parents, but social services went to the Tribal gym and told her children that they were going to have a pizza party in a separate room.

"When my children asked for me," Keschick said. "They were told that I was going to be there later.

"And they were taken away. My children were lied to, and they were scared."

Keschick said that by the time her parents were notified the children were already placed. She went to Tribal Court and got her kids back. Then in February, the kids were taken away again. This time, she hasn't been able to get them back.

"I was out with my family for the first time, in many years," Keschick said. "We went to the bar, and there was a fight inside.

"I went in to get my sister."

Keschick said that the next day, she was informed that someone saw her drinking and she was not supposed to. According to the rules set forth by social services, Keschick said that she was not to drink in front of her children.

Her father, Elmer, asks, "What's going on out here?"

"I think they're trying to take her kids away for nothing," Elmer Keschick said. "It's not right."

She said her mother was caring for her children that night.

"I feel like history is repeating itself because I am a Native woman fighting to keep my kids, who are unjustly taken by white social workers,"

Keschick said. "There are a lot of Native women who are having their children taken away out here."

A 1978 federal law, the National Indian Child Welfare Act, mandates that Tribes handle custody issues involving Native children. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal Court and social services have jurisdiction in this case.

But social workers privately acknowledge that it is difficult to find Native foster parents, especially for the most troubled youth. They have little choice but to turn to the non-Native foster parents recruited by the Michigan Department of Human Services.

All of Keschick's children are members of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and she said that her children's per capita income payments are being used to pay for their welfare.

"They are also making me pay child support for my children, but their father doesn't have to pay anything," Keschick said. "He is not Native."

Keschick said that she received notice from the Tribal family court specialist in mid-April, that she has third-party custody of her children, and is ordered to pay \$2,271 per month for child support.

On the same document, it states that Romero is ordered to pay \$44 per month for child support. Romero does not receive per capita payments from the Tribe. Keshick does.

She wants her children back. But after the most recent court hearing Friday, she is only allowed to have supervised visits with her children for three hours a week.

"(Social services) took one of my days away because they say I've got a bad attitude," Keschick said. "The judge warned me to follow the rules, or I won't be able to have visitation with my children."

Keshick's mother, Patricia, said that she does not know "how things got so turned around."

"They set up a safety program for her, and she's the bad person now," Patricia Keschick said. "(When she was with Romero) she wasn't allowed out of the house."

Christina Keschick said she will appear in Tribal Court in 30 days for re-evaluation.

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[http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/052508/loc\\_mother.shtml](http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/052508/loc_mother.shtml)



Monday, May 26, 2008

# Adults get tips to prevent, act on child sex abuse

Jennifer Chambers / The Detroit News

**PONTIAC** -- Acts of sexual abuse against a child are difficult for most adults to comprehend, but a new program aims to make sure they aren't difficult to report.

The program, geared toward training teachers, day care providers and parents to recognize signs of sexual abuse, promises to get children the help they need and gives adults tools to react appropriately to often horrific circumstances.

"Stewards of Children" is a national program created by Darkness to Light, which trains adults to prevent youngsters from being sexually abused by minimizing opportunities for predators, and teaches them how to act on suspicions of sexual abuse.

Cindy Bridgman, director of community outreach for CARE HOUSE of Oakland County, which is implementing the program around Oakland County, said most current programs teach children about their bodies and how to talk to adults about abuse.

"Training adults is a gap that no one else addresses," Bridgman said. "We as a society feel strongly that children should be kept safe by adults, but in no other circumstances -- other than sexual abuse -- do we tell kids to watch out for themselves."

One aspect of the program deals with why many adults have trouble reporting allegations of child sexual abuse.

"It's so devastating for us to think that someone could do this," Bridgman said. "Most kids are put into the care of someone we pick. So, as an adult, we have to accept that someone we know could be an abuser. The program helps us prepare ourselves that it's a possibility -- you are aware of what needs to take place so you don't go into panic and denial."

The three-hour training sessions come with a workbook, DVD and some startling statistics: one in four girls and one in six boys is sexually abused before age 18.

Ninety percent of abusers have a relationship with a child.

"Abuse is so traumatic. It's almost impossible for children to verbalize so an adult can know. We need to learn what we can pick up on as adults," Bridgman said.

Examples include unexplained changes in a child's behaviors. Perhaps once they were into potty training, but now they aren't. They used to love to go to swimming lessons and now they don't. Sexual behavior and language that are not age appropriate can be a red flag.

State law requires certain people, called mandatory reporters, to report allegations or suspicions of child

sexual abuse to police and child protective services.

In 2006 in Oakland County, 12 people -- including several teachers -- were prosecuted for failure to report.

"There are a lot of misconceptions of who needs to report, when and how," said Deb Carley, Oakland County's chief deputy prosecutor.

For information, call CARE House of Oakland County at (248) 332-7173.

*You can reach Jennifer Chambers at (248) 647-7402 or [jchambers@detnews.com](mailto:jchambers@detnews.com).*

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Tuesday, May 27, 2008

# Michigan State Police investigating crash that killed child

Tom Greenwood / The Detroit News

**CANTONTWP.** -- Michigan State Police are investigating a crash that killed a 12-year-old boy and injured another child on Memorial Day. According to WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), the accident occurred on the southbound side of Interstate 275 at Warren.

The 12-year-old boy died of his injuries after the crash. The second, unidentified child, remains in critical condition at the University of Michigan Hospital.

*You can reach Tom Greenwood at (313) 222-2023 or [tgreenwood@detnews.com](mailto:tgreenwood@detnews.com).*

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Adrian Daily Telegram  
Sat., May 24, 2008

## County Jobless Rate Drops

By Dennis Pelham

ADRIAN, Mich. - Lenawee County's jobless rate took a welcome turn away from a path toward double digits last month. After several months of job losses, the county gained 463 jobs in April and saw its unemployment rate fall from 9.4 percent to 8.1 percent, according to reports released Friday by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

The statewide jobless rate fell to 6.6 percent.

The improvement in the job market comes during a period of significant increases in public assistance claims at Lenawee County's office of the Michigan Department of Human Services.

In the first four months of this year the DHS office received 1,546 new applications for assistance, county office director Joe Satterelli reported last week to the county commission's human services committee.

"Case loads are three times higher that they were four years ago," Satterelli said. The office has also granted 415 expedited food assistance claims, he said, in cases where families have "no food, no money and no income, and usually there is a baby."

The food assistance case load in Lenawee County has grown 53 percent in the past five years, he said, and Medicaid cases have probably doubled. Day care assistance cases have dropped from about 1,000 to 558 because there are fewer people working and in need of that assistance, Satterelli said.

The office was also busy with emergency energy assistance cases this winter, he said. From October through March the office paid \$201,874 to utilities and \$138,304 in electric bills.

The job picture improved in most Michigan counties during April, according to the Labor and Economic Development reports.

"Hiring continued in warm-weather activities such as lodging and restaurants, construction and business services. And, at the same time, fewer individuals entered the labor force looking for jobs," said a report released through South Central Michigan Works.

In addition to an employment growing by 463 to an April total of 46,163 people, Lenawee County saw its overall work force shrink by 240 to a 50,218 total.

The labor force shrank for the month in all 12 counties in the region that includes Lenawee County, the report said.

“Over the month, eight of the twelve regional counties recorded employment gains at an average rate of six tenths of a percentage point,” the report said. “Employment edged down in Cass and St. Joseph counties primarily due to the strike at a major auto supplier.”

Lenawee and Hillsdale were the only counties in the region with jobless rates higher than the statewide 6.6 percent.

Hillsdale County had a 7.9 percent jobless rate compared to Lenawee County’s 8.1 percent. Jackson County’s rate was 6.5 percent. Washtenaw County had a 4.2 percent jobless rate and Monroe County 6.4 percent.

Lenawee County’s April jobless rate is a full percent higher than the 7.1 percent recorded last year and there were 515 more workers among the unemployed this April compared to a year ago.

Unemployment rates were down in eight counties in the region over the year.

## Chefs against Hunger cooks up funds for needy

Posted by [jbarr](#) May 23, 2008 11:00AM



Shawano Cleary / Special to the Gazette

Shawn Hagen, left, of Bravo, and his assistant, Josh Breese, prepare a meal during the Chefs Against Hunger fundraising event Thursday night in Kalamazoo.

By William R. Wood  
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388-8549

KALAMAZOO -- A few chefs who participated in the Chefs Against Hunger competition Thursday night certainly went home tired of garbanzo beans. They had to use the beans in all the dishes they made.

The six chefs involved put the beans in salad dressing, made garbanzo soup and garbanzo sauces and fried garbanzo fritters. They made it into a paste and coated fish with it. They stuffed fish with garbanzo beans.

Let's not forget the dessert made by Oakwood Bistro's Ryan Soule -- garbanzo sweet-potato pudding with marshmallows.

In the end, Eric Gillish, chef of The Union Cabaret & Grill, was selected by four judges as the winner of the \$30-ticket event, a fundraiser for Ministry with Community.

Gillish prepared flash-fried whitefish strips with a red beet and garbanzo relish and roasted garlic herb oil; wilted green salad with a chipolte garbanzo vinaigrette topped by marinated and grilled mushrooms; and pan-fried whitefish over braised lentils with a red garbanzo bean sauce and warm cauliflower and celery beet slaw.

About 200 people came to the event, held on the second floor of a building occupied by Food Dance Cafe, 401 E. Michigan Ave. It was the second year for the event.

The chefs were given two surprise ingredients -- a pound of whitefish and two cans of garbanzo beans -- and asked to use the foods in preparing a three-course meal within 45 minutes. The chefs also were given access to a rack of basic items from Ministry with Community and assisted by Ministry with Community staff members and volunteers.

The chefs were doubly challenged by the patrons who crowded around their work stations and who asked questions.

"I feel for these guys," said Dan Pelletier, of Desserts Unlimited in Paw Paw, who provided desserts for guests. "When you're a chef, you're usually stuck back in the kitchen and don't have to deal with all of this."

Shawn Hagen, of Bravo, sliced white button mushrooms, put them in a can of leftover beet juice to dye them red and topped a salad with the bright-red mushrooms.

Sam Luna, of Webster's, put pureed canned sweet potatoes, water, salt and pepper in a nitrous oxide whipped-cream dispenser to make sweet-potato foam to garnish a dish. The chefs were allowed to bring any type of portable cooking equipment they desired.

"Their cooking is such a tactile endeavor," said patron Dennis Burke of the chefs. "And sometimes it seems they do more than touch the food -- they sense it."

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## Douds honored for service

Posted by [emcmicha](#) May 24, 2008 07:00AM

**KALAMAZOO --** A Kalamazoo couple with a long history of volunteerism are the 2008 winners of Senior Services Inc.'s Helen Coover Lifetime Achievement Award.

Robert Doud, vice president of public affairs and development for Bronson Healthcare Group, and Mary Doud, deputy director of the Kalamazoo Public Library, received the award at Thursday's annual meeting of Senior Services.



Robert Doud, vice president of public affairs and development for Bronson Healthcare Group, and Mary Doud, deputy director of the Kalamazoo Public Library, received the award at Thursday's annual meeting of Senior Services.

"Bob and Mary have partnered to help people of all ages live better, richer and more secure lives in our community," said Senior Services President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Littke. "Kalamazoo is a better place to live because of the tireless efforts of this wonderful couple."

Both served for several years on the Greater Kalamazoo United Way allocations committee. Robert is a former chairman of the panel.

Mary Doud, 60, is a member and former president of the Friendship Village board and an ex-member of the YWCA board, and is still part of its nominating committee. She is active with the Ready to Read early childhood literacy program and Reading Together community reading program.

Robert Doud, 61, is president of the board of the Family Health Center, chairman of Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. and past chairman of the Downtown Development Authority. He also is on the board of the Edison Neighborhood Association.

Both credit their employers with encouraging them in their community activities. "It's a real combination of professional activity and personal outreach," Mary Doud said.

The Douds have engaged in countless volunteer efforts since 1972, when they moved to Kalamazoo from Wisconsin so Mary Doud could get a master's degree in library science from Western Michigan University. They fell in love with the community and decided to stay when Mary Doud was offered a job in 1973 at the Kalamazoo Public Library, where she has been employed for 35 years.

Robert Doud, meanwhile, had been working for Kalamazoo College. He proceeded to earn a doctorate from WMU, then took a job as dean of health and science at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. From there, he went to Bronson, where he has been employed for about 20 years.

"Mary has devoted most of her adult life in the public-library field, volunteering in countless ways to promote literacy and enrich the lives of children and adults," Littke said.

"Bob has been a consistent leader and tireless advocate for all generations as well," he said. "Bob personally assisted Senior Services with numerous projects over many years including our campaign to build the Pauline Allen Nutrition Center, and more recently he served on our campaign to renovate and enhance Senior Services facilities while building our agency endowment."

Helen Coover, for whom the award is named, was the first winner in 1994 as a result of having "demonstrated a lifetime of giving to Senior Services and others in our community," Littke said.

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